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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the work of the National Council of La Raza to improve education for Hispanic students and their families. It provides an overview of the council's Innovative Education Project, an effort to demonstrate and evaluate effective models for use by affiliated community-based organizations to improve educational outcomes for Hispanic students. The project stems from an examination of the educational status of Hispanics, signs of promise and some specific concerns raised by local communities. The five models used by the project include: the Academia del Pueblo; Project Success; Project Second Chance; Parents as Partners; and the Teacher Support Network. Three of the five models are designed to address student groups and special populations that have been determined to be the most "at-risk." The remaining two projects address the needs of parents and teachers, whose informed assistance is essential to improve children's educational outcomes. This paper reports on the progress of the program, and it provides information on the models themselves, including background about their development. It also offers some general impressions gathered during the process of demonstrating and evaluating these programs. The paper reflects the belief of La Raza that fundamental changes in the philosophy, structure, and practices of schooling are necessary if public schools are to improve education for Hispanic and other minority group students. The paper concludes that community-generated local projects can work effectively with parents and teachers to improve Hispanic children's school performance. (TES)

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MAKING EDUCATION WORK FOR HISPANIC AMERICANS:

Some Promising Community-Based Practices

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PREFACE

An earlier version of this paper titled "Making Schools Work for Underachieving Minorities: Some Promising Practices," was delivered at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) annual meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana as part of a panel presentation on "Making Schools Work for Underachieving Minorities."

The title was changed in this version to more closely indicate the content of the paper, which describes the work of the National Council of La Raza with Hispanic community-based organizations to improve education for Hispanic students and their families. The deletion of the term "underachieving minorities" also reflects the Council's belief that schools are underachieving as often as are students where minority and low-income students are concened.

Appreciation is expressed to Emily McKay, Executive Vice President, and Arturo Vargas, Senior Education Policy Analyst, of the National Council of La Raza's Washington, D.C. office, and Maryann Reyes, Education Policy Fellow in the Council's Los Angeles Program Office for their review of the paper, and their comments and suggestions.

I. INTRODUCTION

The American educational system is often portrayed as a pipeline, successfully transporting individuals from childhood to college or full participation in the world of work. However, it has become increasingly clear that this pipeline more closely resembles a sieve where Hispanic children, youth and adults are concerned. National and state data and local experience document that Hispanics slip out of this pipeline at disproportionate rates. From kindergarten through college, proportionately fewer Hispanics than either Blacks or Whites are enrolled in school, and those who are enrolled are often prepared for very different futures than non-Hispanic children.

Only recently have the public and the schools begun to confront the fact that student demographics are changing rapidly. The schools are being called upon to serve a growing proportion of ethnic- and language-minority group children -- the very children they have historically served least well. While business and labor leaders, commissions, and study groups continue to warn about the inability of dropouts and students without post-high school education and training to find productive work in our changing economy, dropout rates remain high, and the majority of minority-group students continue to be found in non-college-bound tracks. In fact, some of the measures adopted in the past five years in the name of "school reform" may actually push these figures higher.[1]

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[1] McDill, Edward, Gary Natriello and Aaron Pallas, "Raising Standards and Retaining Students: The Impact of the Reform Recommendations on Potential Dropouts," Review of Educational Research, Winter 1985, Vol. 55, No. 4.

The National Council of La Raza believes that fundamental changes in the philosophy, structure, and practices of schooling are necessary if the public schools are to do a better job of educating Hispanic and other minority group students. Equity and excellence in education must be viewed as twin and inseparable goals. However, given the resistance to change inherent in most bureaucratic systems, systematic restructuring of the schools must realistically be viewed as a critical but long-term agenda. The Council's Innovative Education Project was launched in 1984 both as a means of contributing experiences and input from the community level to the school reform process, and as a means of addressing some of the short-term needs of students who are currently enrolled in school systems unresponsive to their needs.

This paper provides an overview of the National Council of La Raza's Innovative Education Project, an effort to demonstrate and evaluate effective models for use by Hispanic community-based organizations to improve educational outcomes for Hispanic students. Based on a review of the research literature, data on educational outcomes for Hispanics, and extensive interviews with Hispanic community-based organizations, the Council developed five program models which can be used by community-based organizations to improve the educational attainment of Hispanic students.

Three of the five models are designed to address the school-age groups and special populations which both national research and local community experience indicate are among the most educationally "at-risk." The remaining two projects address the needs of parents and teachers, whose informed assistance is essential to improve children's educational outcomes.

The project is currently working with local Hispanic community-based organizations, formally affiliated with the Council, to demonstrate and evaluate these models. Since such demonstrations in most cases require new sources of funding, all models are not currently operational in all sites. Five projects in four sites have been fully funded and are operational; 15 other agencies are developing local variations of the models, seeking funding and training staff.

At this point in our project, there are no evaluation results to present or definitive assertions to make about "what works" with Hispanic students in community-based programs. This paper reports on the progress of the project to date, provides information on the models themselves and the information which led to their development, and offers some general impressions gathered during the process of demonstrating and evaluating these programs.

The approach of working with Hispanic community-based organizations reflects the Council's belief that these institutions are critical components of the Hispanic community and centers for leadership development and for change within communities. The project also reflects the belief that parents and communities have both a strong interest in and responsibility for helping to improve the quality of education available to their children and youth.

The models for community-based educational programs developed by the Council's Innovative Education Project are based on an examination of the educational status of Hispanics, promising practices, and the specific concerns raised by local communities. An overview of that information is provided below.

II. THE EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF HISPANICS

Of the 41.4 million children attending public schools in the United States in the fall of 1984, 8.8%, or approximately 3.6 million, were Hispanic. While Hispanics were enrolled in elementary school at about the same rates as Blacks and Whites (99.2%), only 90.3% of Hispanics of high school age were enrolled in high school, and only 60.0% of Hispanics aged 18 to 24 were high school graduates. Thus, national data indicate that approximately four in ten Hispanics ages 18 to 24 were high school dropouts.[2]

Signs of educational risk appear early for Hispanic children, as indicated by enrollment below expected grade level. Data from the 1984 Current Population Survey indicate that almost one-third (28%) of Hispanic children in grades one through four are enrolled below grade level, compared to 25% of Black students and 20% of White students. By middle school years, this enrollment below grade-level has increased so that nearly four in ten (39.5%) Hispanic students in grades five to eight, are at least one year below modal grade, compared to 37.3% of Blacks and 24.9% of Whites. That figure increases to 43.1% in the early high school years, then drops to 34.8% in grades 11 and 12, when many of these below-grade-level students are old enough and discouraged enough to withdraw from school.

Additionally, recent research suggests that grade-level retention as an educational strategy is of questionable benefit, since children who are underachieving but who are promoted with their peer group seem to make greater gains than children who are retained to repeat the grade. According to some

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[2] Unless otherwise cited, the educational data in this section are taken from Orum, Lori S., The Education of Hispanics: Status and Implications, National Council of La Raza, 1986.

studies, "retained pupils fall behind during the year they are retained and spend the rest of their academic careers in a vain attempt to catch up."[3] Concludes Anne Wheelock, in a review of the literature on retention, "being held back once increases a student's chances of dropping out by 40-50%; being held back twice increases chances of dropping out by 90%."[4] Since below-grade level enrollment occurs frequently among Hispanic youth, school delay must be seen as an important risk factor in the education of Hispanics.

Regarding the type of curriculum and classes taken, Hispanic students are less likely to be placed in programs for gifted and talented children than are White or Black children. Hispanics are similarly under-represented in high school honors classes; in fact, of all racial/ethnic groups, Hispanic high school seniors were the least likely to participate in honors mathematics and English courses, according to the High School and Beyond Study.

Hispanics are also disproportionately represented in remedial courses and low-level curriculum tracks. High School and Beyond reported that nearly four in ten Hispanic high school students were enrolled in remedial mathematics and English classes.[5] By their senior year in high school, High School and Beyond data indicate, nearly three-fourths of Hispanic students had been placed in non-academic curricular tracks. Some 40% were in "general" curricular tracks, designed for students who do not expect to continue their education beyond high school; and 35% were in vocational programs, with the majority enrolled

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[3] Wheelock, Anne., "Dropping Out: What the Research Says," Equity and Choice, Vol. III, No. 1, Fall 1986.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Acher, Carol., "Raising Hispanic Achievement from "Make Something Happen: Hispanics and Urban High School Reform," ERIC/CUE Digest, Number 26, April, 1985.

in business and office occupations courses. As well documented in the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship's recently-released report, "The Forgotten Half: Non College Youth in America," a high school diploma does not open many doors in today's labor market. The Commission found that "where high school graduates could once seek steady, good paying jobs in manufacturing, agriculture, and transportation, they find these positions are disappearing by the millions."[6] These youth are being prepared to participate in a labor market which no longer exists, and, in the words of the Commission, "face a questionable future."

Data from John Goodlad's "A Study of Schooling" as reported by Jeannie Oakes in Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality and various journal articles, point out clearly that children in lower level tracks (which are disproportionately composed of Hispanic and Black students) are taught with very different methods and aims than students in higher level tracks. Teacher expectations — a powerful influence on student outcomes — are lower, higher-order thinking skills are not developed, and students are taught mainly by drill and repetition. Oakes further reports that high-level tracks teach "high status content," which she defines as "literature, expository and thematic writing, library research, and mathematical ideas." In contrast, she found that students in low-level courses were not expected to learn these skills, but spent most time practicing language mechanics and computation.[7] With such different curricular content and teaching styles, assignment to

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[6] William T. Grant Foundation, Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, "The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America," January 1988.

[7] Oakes, Jeannie., "Tracking, Inequality and the Rhetoric of Reform: Why Schools Don't Change," Boston University Journal of Education, Vol. 168, No. 1, 1986.

lower level tracks usually operates as a dead-end placement, with the students being prepared throughout their school experiences for a significantly limited future. Thus, even those who graduate from high school finish their education at a competitive disadvantage.

Hispanic students graduating form high school in 1980 had completed fewer Carnegie Units than White students in almost every type of academic subject. Hispanic high school graduates were also less likely than White high school graduates to have received "A's" in school and were almost twice as likely to have received grades of "D" or "F." Compared to other minority students, grade point averages of Hispanic graduates were slightly higher than those of Black students and dramatically lower than those of Asian and Pacific Islander students. Hispanics were also most likely to report failing or below-average grades in core academic subjects: mathematics (35.3%), natural sciences (34.6%), social sciences (34.2%), and English (31.4%). Over one-third of Hispanic high school graduates in 1980 earned a "D" or "F" average in core academic subjects. Thus, as measured by both type of courses taken and grades received, Hispanic high school graduates have had a high school experience quite different from that of most White students, an experience which does not prepare them well for the future.

Almost half of Puerto Rican and Mexican American students do not stay in school long enough to earn diplomas from any track; they drop out, some 40% who leave departing before the second semester of their sophomore year. Some of these youth probably re-enroll in adult education or community-based employment and training programs and secure General Educational Development (GED) certificates, or return to school. A recent study by the General Accounting Office estimates that 50% may return, but other studies indicate

that Hispanic students return less frequently than White students.[8] Regardless of the number of students who eventually re-enroll, the fact remains that something important was missing in their initial public school experience.

There are a variety of reasons why students leave high school without receiving a diploma. Some are personal characteristics or factors; some are characteristics of the schools that they attend. While many laundry lists are offered of personal factors which purportedly identify potential Hispanic dropouts, the factors most consistently linked to dropping out have to do with family socioeconomic status (SES) and other aspects of family background. However, caution should be taken in assessing the relationship between student behaviors and choices (e.g., marriage, pregnancy, working) and the decision to drop out. While a relationship is indicated, the direction of causation is unclear.[9]

The characteristics of the schools dropouts attend are also important factors in why students leave school. Schools may not be able to change the social or economic backgrounds of the students they serve, but they do control the decisions made on how to educate those students.[10] Among the factors within the schools' control are attendance, discipline and promotion policies, resource allocation, hiring practices, the availability of special instruction to meet special needs, inservice training for teachers and counselors, and

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[8] U.S. General Accounting Office, "School Dropouts: The Extent and Nature of the Problem," June, 1986.

[9] Barro, Stephen M., Who Drops Out of High School?: Findings from High School and Beyond, National Center for Education Statistics, 1987.

[10] Wheelock, op.cit.

provisions made to ensure parent involvement. Certainly the lack of Hispanic role models among teachers and other school staff, the limited attention counselors report giving to Hispanic students, work-study and cooperative education programs which underserve Hispanics, the lack of appropriate programs to meet language needs and involve parents, and the fact that many Hispanics attend schools in districts with low-per pupil expenditures, high pupil/teacher ratios and limited resources all affect the quality of education provided to Hispanics and contribute to decisions to leave school.

The 1982 Follow-up to the High School and Beyond Study asked Hispanic youth who had been sophomore participants in the 1980 study and subsequently dropped out of school about their reasons for leaving school. Early marriage and/or pregnancy were listed as contributing reasons by Hispanic girls, with one-third reporting leaving because of marriage or plans to marry, and one-fourth listing pregnancy as a reason for dropping out. Some 26% of male dropouts indicated that they left because they had been offered a job and chose to work, and 17% indicated that they had been expelled or suspended. Again, the caution about the lack of clarity in the direction of causation in the relationship of these factors should be noted.

The largest group of Hispanic students (34% of males and 32% of females) reported leaving school because of poor grades. Other national data on Hispanic educational attainment support the youths' contention that they dropped out in large part due to poor grades and low attainment that led them to conclude that school was simply not for them. In fact, Michelle Fine's work in New York City high schools revealed that, so convinced are these students that they have failed and that they are simply not able to be learners in the school setting, that they may actually experience — in the

short-term — higher self-esteem after they drop out than do non-college bound students who stay in school.[11]

Teachers and parents, two groups with immense influence on student achievement, are often not effectively and positively involved in the education of Hispanic students. Many parents face educational barriers to effective participation. The average Hispanic adult 25 years and over has completed only 11.5 years of schooling, and 13.5% of Hispanics in this age group have less than a fifth grade education. Further, some studies have suggested that some 56% of Hispanic adults can be considered functionally illiterate in English. Parents with low educational levels, high rates of English illiteracy, and previously unsuccessful experiences with school often have a difficult time knowing how to help their children succeed in school. Further, when the language of the parent is Spanish and the language of the school, its teachers, office workers, counselors, and principals is English, communication becomes a formidable barrier. While studies indicate that Hispanic parents have high — sometimes unrealistically high — aspirations for their children, many lack the skills and confidence to provide their children with the academic benefits associated with active parent involvement.

Regarding teachers, there are few Hispanics in the nation's teaching force (only 2.6% of elementary school teachers and 1.7% of secondary school teachers) and a similarly small proportion among administrators (2.5% of central office staff and 2.0% of principals) and guidance counselors (2.7%). Thus, there are few role models among school personnel, and few persons who are intimately familiar with the Spanish language and the cultures of Hispanic children.

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[11] Wheelock., op.cit.

While there are non-Hispanic teachers who speak Spanish and are familiar with the cultures of their students, those teachers are often assigned to work in bilingual education and other language-assistance programs — which serve only a small proportion of Hispanic children. These teachers are also in short supply in almost every district. Consequently, Hispanic students who do not need language assistance rarely encounter such teachers, and so short is the supply of bilingual teachers with cross-cultural skills, that Hispanic students who are in such programs often do not encounter such teachers either. Most are taught by teachers who know little about Hispanics, and were never trained to provide instruction to language-minority students.

November 1983 data from the Survey of Teacher Demand and Shortage conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics indicated that there were 3,590 uncertified teachers teaching in bilingual education programs, accounting for 12% of all uncertified teachers in the schools. The same survey found that bilingual education had the greatest proportional shortages of any field of education, and that the fewest special recruitment and training incentives were offered by public schools to attract teachers in that field. At the same time, traditional education and teacher training programs have not prepared teachers or administrators to be effective educators of minority group students who may have different language needs and cultures different from those of "mainstream" students, and many school personnel feel unequipped and frustrated.

Unfortunately, some have translated this frustration, along with their inability to understand or effectively teach Hispanic students, into low expectations for those students. Several studies have found that Hispanic students report feeling that their teachers and counselors hold low

expectations for them. A recent Colorado study found that dropouts cited "problems with school officials" and "negative attitudes of teachers" as two of the principal reasons why minority students left school. Some 46% of minority dropouts interviewed for that study also reported that a school official had encouraged them to drop out, and more than 50% said they would have stayed in school if someone had encouraged them to do so.[12] The minority dropouts were also more likely than others to report perceiving racism and prejudice in society and school and related these perceptions about school strongly to teachers' expectations and school policies on suspension and expulsion.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE MODEL PROJECTS

A. Purpose of the Project

While some school districts, or -- more commonly — individual schools, are highly effective in meeting the needs of Hispanic students, the majority can be more fairly described as "underachieving" schools. These are the schools which most Hispanic students attend. Either through lack of will, training or resources (or some combination thereof), these schools have not succeeded well in providing an equitable and excellent education for their Hispanic students.

Even when commitment is high, sufficient resources are available, and teachers and administrators are willing to tinker with the structure of the school, the schools face a formidable challenge in effectively serving Hispanic students and their families. Bilingual personnel are in notoriously short supply in most schools, and the shortage of bilingual counselors,

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[12] Martinez, Ruben., "Minority Youth Dropouts: Personal, Social, and Institutional Reasons for Leaving School," Center for Community Development and Design, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Summer 1986.

psychologists, health personnel and parent outreach workers is even more pronounced.

The segmented nature of public education also makes it difficult for schools to plan for or coordinate family-wide learning programs. Few elementary and secondary schools are able to offer education or training to parents to either help them become partners in their children's education or to upgrade their own skills. Adult education programs are generally not connected to programs serving children, and most concentrate on the basic educational skills necessary for parents to learn English or secure General Educational Development (GED) certificates, rather than the skills which might help them help their children with school. Those parent programs which are run though elementary and secondary schools are too often viewed as a "frill," and when budgets must be cut, are usually among the first casualties.

Few schools have the resources to address the non-academic needs of students and their families, although those needs can frequently interfere with a student's ability to be an effective learner. Lack of affordable, safe housing, unemployment, emergency cash needs for food and heat, lack of affordable health care, needs for counseling or assistance in times of crisis can cause formidable barriers to education for low-income Hispanic families. In recent years, several approaches have been developed to try to pull together community resources to meet these needs for students, including Cities in Schools nationally, and Focus on Youth in Los Angeles.

However, few schools have discovered or utilized a natural resource in many Hispanic communities, Hispanic community-based organizations. These organizations (CBOs) have several advantages in reaching Hispanic families, especially low-income, non-English-speaking families. They are located in the

community, are staffed by bilingual personnel, and generally offer a variety of services which are used by low-income, limited-English proficient parents. Many of these agencies provide services which reach families in crisis situations — emergency food, clothing or fuel assistance, neighborhood health clinics, teen pregnancy programs, substance abuse or family counseling programs. Others assist undocumented families in legalizing their immigration status; provide low-cost child care for pre-schoolers, latch-key services for school-age children, and dropout recovery programs; and offer employment and training programs for unemployed or under-employed adults. Some Hispanic CBOs offer English as a Second Language (ESL) and GED programs. These organizations are designed to serve the very people whom the schools have often had the most difficulty reaching — the poor, the non-English speaking, the recent immigrant, and families in crisis.

Hispanic CBOs are also some of the few Hispanic-controlled community institutions to provide leadership development, programs and advocacy for the Hispanic community. There is no network of historically Hispanic colleges and universities, Hispanic sororities and fraternities, or Hispanic churches comparable to those institutions in the Black community. In many Hispanic communities, Hispanic community-based organizations, therefore, play a key role in providing services to Hispanic families, informing and involving parents and developing leadership.

In 1984, the Council conducted a survey of its affiliated Hispanic community-based organizations to determine what kinds of services were being provided relating to education. The survey indicated that many organizations had developed pre-school and early childhood programs, but then did little with school-age children or their families. Educational programming resumed

only in working with youth who had dropped out of school, become delinquent, developed alcohol or drug dependency problems, and with adults who were working the obtain a GED in conjunction with an employment and training program. These groups had become expert at operating "recovery" programs, helping youth and adults pick up the pieces of their lives after unsuccessful adolescence and schooling.

This approach was dictated in part by the fact that funders have traditionally viewed the provision of educational services to school-age children as the exclusive domain of the schools, and in part by limited staff expertise in the education. However, the same survey noted universal concern with the state of schooling for Hispanic students in local communities, and the desire to be able to prevent some of the educational damage to Hispanic children. The Council's Innovative Education Project was designed to help Hispanic CBOs become effective partners with the schools, and use their unique ability to combine social service approaches with educational programming for students and families that the schools have traditionally had difficulty serving well.

Using the results of the abovementioned survey, extensive interviews with affiliated CBOs, and a synthesis of the previously-cited research, the Council developed five models which Hispanic CBOs could use to contribute to improving education for Hispanic students and their families in their communities. These models were designed to be relatively low-cost, bring together a variety of community resources and volunteers, involve whole families, and utilize innovative and effective educational techniques. While the programs are run by the CBOs, they are designed to cooperate with the schools, provide

information and feedback to teachers and local administrators, and share their insights and experiences with the schools.

This process led the Council and its affiliates to define the following as critical needs to be addressed by community-based interventions:

- Reducing grade level retention in the early school years;
- Increasing the number of Hispanic youth who enroll and succeed in college-preparatory tracks in high school (recognizing that those decisions are most commonly made based on junior high school grades and experiences);
- Helping youth who have already dropped out to re-enroll in an educational program and complete a course of study which will lead to either higher education or stable employment;
- Improving the ability of Hispanic parents to help their children become successful learners in school; and
- Raising the expectations which teachers hold for Hispanic students and improving their skills in working with Hispanic children.

Five program models were designed in response to these concerns. The models and their essential components are described below.

B. The Models

1. **The Academia del Pueblo**

The Academia del Pueblo addresses the problems of early academic failure and grade retention faced by many Hispanic children in elementary school, by establishing after-school and summer "academies" to provide reinforcement and supplemental educational assistance to help children meet and exceed grade promotion requirements in elementary school. During the school year, the program can be offered from two to five afternoons per week, depending on local resources and needs.

Children may be recommended for the Academia by either parents or teachers,

and teacher assessments of the areas in which a child needs additional skills are solicited. While the programs typically charge a very minimal fee for participation (which may be waived based on income), the real "cost" to the parent is time for parental involvement. A parent contract is required for each child, stipulating that the parent will attend at least 50% of the monthly parent education activities, read with the child at home for a contracted amount of time (or, in the case of parents with limited reading skills, having the child read aloud to the parent), establish and enforce rules for homework and school attendance, review and sign the child's homework, and ensure that the child has a library card.

Instruction for the children centers around language arts and reading (English as a Second Language where necessary), mathematics and problem solving skills, and enrichment activities such as computer education and Spanish. Instruction is provided by a group of teachers (the head teacher must be certificated and experienced in working with Hispanic children) and cross-age tutors. Hispanic high school honors students have been used very successfully in the first Academia demonstration. Instructors are encouraged to use cooperative learning techniques wherever possible, and the belief that all the children can learn given the appropriate instruction is the credo of the program.

While local variations occur depending upon specific needs and resources, the Council has defined the following as essential components of the Academia, and insists that each local demonstration:

1. Primarily serve children in kindergarten through fourth grade who are experiencing difficulty in school as indicated by low reading ability, limited proficiency in English, above average rates of absenteeism or disciplinary problems, low test scores, or previous incidence of retention.

2. Give highest priority for admission to students who are in immediate danger of being retained to repeat a grade level.

3. Have improvement of reading skills as a central program component.

4. Contain a component designed to assist the parents of children enrolled in the program. Such a program must seek to increase the parents' ability to help their children learn, confidence and skills in interacting with the school systems, and their expectations and aspirations for their children.

5. Base instructional programs on an individualized assessment of need.

6. Secure a cooperative agreement with the schools referring children to the project and establish a regular means of communication between the Academia and the school(s).

7. Be based on the philosophy that all children can succeed in school given proper assistance and instruction.

8. Have on its instructional staff at least one certified teacher experienced in working with limited-English proficient and Hispanic students.

9. Make some use (on either a volunteer or staff basis) of student tutors to provide positive role models for younger children and allow for cross-age tutoring.

10. Provide students with instruction through whichever language they are most proficient. Thus, limited English proficient students are to receive content instruction in Spanish and also receive assistance with English language development.

11. Comply with the evaluation design and collect and report data to the Council evaluator on a timely basis.

Other components which are desireable, but not required include providing enrichment activities to gifted children or children meeting or exceeding grade requirements. Such children may be served in a separate group or on a special day, or a restricted number of slots may be allocated for these children to participate in the general Academia program. Programs are also encouraged to use an enrichment rather than remedial approach for all children (low and high achievers) participating in the program. Instruction in Spanish

as a second language and instruction with and about computers is also encouraged where possible.

The Academia del Pueblo is currently completing its second demonstration year in Kansas City, Missouri. The program is being operated by Council affiliate the Guadalupe Center, a multi-service Hispanic community-based organization, and has spurred the development of several additional educational programs at agency. The Kansas City Academia serves neighborhood Hispanic children in kindergarten through sixth grade from both public and parochial schools. Currently 48 children are served in this afterschool and summer program. Preliminary evaluation results give the program high marks from students, parents, and the local school principals and teachers. This model will also be demonstrated in Milwaukee, Wisconsin by Council affiliate Centro de la Comunidad Unida later this year.

2. **Project Success**

Project Success is designed primarily to serve Hispanic youth in middle or junior high schools to increase their high school completion and college entrance rates by providing them with academic enrichment, career and academic counseling and other special opportunities. In most cases, the project is specifically concerned with equipping youth with the skills and interest to enroll and succeed in college-preparatory curriculum tracks when they reach high school. It is designed to operate from two to five days per week after school and in the summers, depending on local resources. Project Success offers academic instruction, career awareness and personal development activities, since youth need to be not only encouraged but also enabled.

While the research literature and all the communities included in the project to date have identified middle school/junior high school as a critical

point for intervention, the model does not have to be used exclusively for that age group. Project Success may also be used with younger or older at-risk students if the aim is to increase academic success, reduce tracking, lead to higher rates of high school graduation, and increase the possibility of post-secondary education and/or training. Since an important goal of the project is to avoid low level tracking, a project in Rochester, New York discovered that critical tracking decisions in that school system were being made in grade five and, therefore, designed a Project Success to work with fourth and fifth grade students. A Project Success demonstration just beginning in Chicago will work with fifth through eighth grade students, and a project under development in northern New Mexico plans to work with youth enrolled below grade-level in senior high school. However, the majority of Project Success demonstrations will involve early adolescents.

As in the Academia, referral may come from parents or teachers and participation requires both a signed parent contract and a teacher assessment. However, given the much higher level of choice available to adolescents — who typically vote with their feet — the programs must also be reflective of student-perceived needs and design activities which meet the interests of the young people. Program practitioners working with middle and junior high school students are asked to draw on the research of the Center for Early Adolescence in planning programs to ensure that activities are developmentally appropriate for young teens.

Because many of the students participating in Project Success will be the products of low-level ability tracks, the projects are to pay particular attention to the development of higher-order thinking and analytic skills, and problem-solving skills in math rather than simply computation skills. They

are also asked to employ cooperative learning techniques wherever possible. Curricula available through the Council reflect these needs.

Through a partnership with Time, Inc. and the Xerox Corporation, four local sites are using the "Time to Read" program as a part of their reading improvement efforts. The program uses high interest materials (Time, Sports Illustrated, and People magazines), features small "study group" style instruction, involves adults from local businesses who also serve as role models and sources of information about the world of work, and provides students with their own subscriptions to magazines — ensuring that high interest reading materials are available at home. This curriculum has been used for one year in four sites — three with young teens and one with adults — and has been very warmly received by students and tutors alike.

The Council also makes available training in and curriculum for Law Related Education as a vehicle for improving students' oral language, analytic and reasoning skills. Through a partnership with the Constitutional Rights Foundation, a special set of materials is being developed for use in Innovative Education Projects. Evidence that Law Related Education also has a positive influence on delinquency reduction also makes the program popular with communities which have identified delinquency, drugs and gang activity as a major concern for youth of this age.

Finally, a relationship with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Opportunities in Science program has made available training and curriculum for teaching problem solving in math and science. Groups are also encouraged to form relationships with local science and technology centers and museums to provide students with hand-on experiences with science

and math, and recruit individuals who can tell youth about careers requiring math and science proficiency.

Career education is to be addressed by involving as many volunteers in the program as possible — either as subject matter tutors, guest speakers, or mentors for students interested in specific fields. At least one lead teacher and a counselor are required and each student is to have an individually developed "success plan." To provide essential components, each local Project Success is expected to:

1. Primarily serve students who are at risk of being tracked into non-academic programs (or already are in such programs.) Students enrolled in or achieving below grade level are primary candidates for participation in Project Success.

2. Involve parents and other significant family members.

3. Include both academic services and career awareness activities so students are both encouraged and provided needed information and skills.

4. Provide real opportunities for students who are below grade level to "catch up" with peers by offering tutoring, special classes or seminars. Projects should also investigate the possibility of arranging for mastery exams through the school district.

5. Have some type of cooperating relationship with the schools and provide for communication with the students' school counselors.

6. Provide opportunities for students to learn about a variety of professional and technical careers, and include opportunities for youth to interact with and learn from adults working in careers of interest.

7. Provide youth with the opportunity to form supportive relationships with knowledgeable and caring adults who are neither family members nor regular school teachers.

8. Include bilingual personnel.

9. Collect data, document project progress and follow the Innovative Education Project's evaluation design.

10. Design project activities which reflect the developmental needs of early adolescents, of the age group of the target population.

3. Project Second Chance

Project Second Chance was designed in recognition of the needs of the large proportion of Hispanic youth who have already left school without diplomas. The program may operate in a variety of different ways because funding sources for these types of endeavors vary tremendously. Local programs may be full- or part-time, and with or without job training and placement. However, the basic aim of the project is to provide educational services and counseling so that youth can either gain a high school equivalency certificate or diploma and continue on with some type of education — traditional post-secondary or specialized training.

As with Project Success, Project Second Chance programs must deal with the fact that most students will be products of low-level tracks and consequently need assistance in developing higher-order thinking and reading skills and problem-solving abilities. The programs utilize the curricular materials and approaches outlined for Project Success, plus whatever other materials and subjects are required by local accrediting agencies. Several computer-assisted instructional curricula are also being evaluated for possible use by these programs as one facet of the program.

As with the models previously described, instructional programs are individualized, parent involvement is required, cooperative learning techniques are used and counseling and career education are part of the program. A Project Second Chance is currently being demonstrated in Houston, Texas by the Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans, an Hispanic community-based organization which has had its educational program accredited by the State of Texas and can grant Texas high school diplomas. Other variations are being developed by organizations which do not have such status,

but plan to concentrate on preparation for the General Educational Development (GED) certificate. This project, perhaps more than any other, will vary substantially by local site; still, each site shall:

1. Recruit and enroll youth or young adults who have dropped out or been excluded from school.

2. Involve parents, spouses, and other significant family members.

3. Provide an academic program which will allow participants to acquire a strong foundation in reading and writing and all other required subjects and earn either a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate.

4. Provide career awareness activities that expose students to information about a variety of professional and technical careers (especially non-traditional careers or fields where Hispanics have been under-represented), and provide opportunities for youth to interact with adults working in careers of interest.

5. Provide students with personal development activities such as goal setting, planning, study skills, conflict resolution, family living, job success skills, and other "maturity" skills.

6. Have some type of cooperative relationship with the schools from which the students have dropped out, where possible, in order to gain access to students' records and to determine the possibility of the student's re-enrolling in school.

7. Provide youth with the opportunity to form supportive relationships with knowledgeable and caring adults who are neither family members nor regular school teachers.

8. Include bilingual personnel.

9. Collect data, document project progress and follow the Innovative Education Project's evaluation design.

4. Parents as Partners

The Parents as Partners model recognizes that Hispanic parents are their children's most important teachers but often lack the necessary skills to help their children progress successfully through school. It provides training and assistance to parents so they can become active partners in their children's education. The program is a required component of the Academia,

Project Success and Project Second Chance, but may also be operated as a free-standing program by organizations which do not operate educational programs for children or youth, but are interested in parent leadership development.

The program is designed to offer a variety of educational seminars to parents, with topics ranging from activities which parents can use at home in everyday life to help their children, to developing skills to help parents understand test scores and report cards, school budgets and policy-making procedures, and the structure of other entities which influence the quality of life in the community. The model has been operational for two years in Kansas City, Missouri, and the Council is collaborating with this site to develop a comprehensive parent training curriculum which will be available to all parent programs.

Because of the need to involve parents in helping children improve math abilities, training has also been provided to demonstration sites on the use of the Family Math approach developed by Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of California at Berkeley. This approach is being used in several sites, including Chicago, Phoenix and Kansas City. The Council has requested that each Parents as Partners Project:

1. Provide for training and follow-up assistance to help parents create a home environment which reinforces and expands children's learning. These seminars or mini-courses might include sessions on: child development and learning theory, language acquisition, effective parenting skills, effective discipline, communication and dispute resolution skills, and activities to reinforce reading or math skills at home.

2. Provide training to help parents monitor their children's educational progress, become more effective participants on school advisory committees and better advocates for their children's educational rights. Specific training priorities must be established by local communities based on needs assessments, but in most communities, training will be needed in understanding the structure and functions of advisory committees, school governance and finance, understanding

school budgets, legal rights of children, and effective advocacy strategies.

3. Provide leadership development activities which could support the organization of a local task force on Hispanic education to provide a continuing forum for assessment and cooperative projects to improve educational opportunities in local schools. Leadership development activities should also be designed to enable parents to improve other aspects of life in their communities and participate more widely in civic affairs.

4. Be staffed by a bilingual Parent Coordinator.

5. Establish a cooperative relationship with a school or schools serving children or youth in other projects operated by the agency.

6. Establish an advisory group which works with project staff to set training priorities. Such a group must include parents, school personnel, representatives of business and industry, community agency leaders, and other community members.

7. Conduct training seminars and activities at such times and in such manner so that they are accessible to working and single parents and other relatives (grandparents, older siblings, etc.) who may have caretaker responsibilities. Wherever possible, activities should be designed to involve both mothers and fathers.

8. Collect data, document project progress and follow the Innovative Education Project's Evaluation Design.

5. The Teacher Support Network

The Teacher Support Network is designed to bring together community resources to provide training and assistance to Hispanic teachers and other teachers working with Hispanic children to provide teachers with both community support, and additional skills and resources in serving Hispanic students. The aim of this project is to increase the expectations that these teachers hold for Hispanic students and the positive linkages between the teachers and Hispanic communities, and make them more effective teachers of Hispanic children.

The projects may use a variety of approaches to achieve these aims, including providing workshops for teachers, helping to recruit classroom

volunteers, initiating a special mini-grant programs for teacher-generated enrichment programs, and providing recognition for teachers making outstanding efforts. The project is currently being demonstrated by Association House in Chicago, Illinois. As essential components, the Council has determined that each project shall:

1. Recruit as participants and provide assistance to Hispanic and non-Hispanic classroom teachers serving Hispanic children.

2. Include both educational and motivational activities since teachers need to be both motivated and enabled to better serve their Hispanic pupils.

3. Provide opportunities for participating teachers to form cooperative relationships with other teachers and community members, and provide teachers with the opportunity to share successful strategies and programs with each other.

4. Offer activities and services which encourage the continuing professional development of participating teachers.

5. Seek the cooperation and participation of local school officials (principals, bilingual supervisors, staff development specialists, etc.).

6. Include an assessment of teacher-perceived needs and attitudes early in the project planning phase.

7. Assess parent and community perceptions of teacher attitudes, expectations and needs to determine possible topics for workshops and parent/teacher activities.

8. Include a formal or informal advisory committee.

9. Collect data, document project progress and follow the Innovative Education Project's evaluation design.

C. Council Role

Each of these projects is designed to be implemented by Hispanic community-based organizations, in cooperation with parents, schools, members of the business and corporate communities and other appropriate local organizations. The National Council of La Raza assists demonstration sites in securing

resources to demonstrate the selected model projects, provides demonstration sites with the necessary training and technical assistance to implement the models, and monitors and evaluates the projects. Other assistance provided by the Council to local sites includes facilitating the transfer of information among demonstration projects, so that the various projects can learn from each other's successes and errors.

The project has been tremendously enriched by a relationship with the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, which is working with staff to develop evaluation models which can be used throughout the project. The assistance of staff from the Center in reviewing evaluation designs and data collection instruments has been invaluable.

IV. CONCLUSION

Educational outcomes for Hispanics are well below those for other major U.S. subgroups, and current levels of local, state and federal resources devoted to improving the situation are inadequate. In addition, efforts which are solely remedial and not preventive do not improve the education provided for the thousands of Hispanic children entering school each year. While the Council continues to work at the national level to advocate systemic reforms and adequate funding for teacher training, parent and adult education, effective school practices and programs, and appropriate programs for at-risk children, La Raza also believes that much change can be effectively initiated through community-generated local projects which can supplement school offerings and work with parents and teachers to increase their ability to help Hispanic children succeed in school.

The Council's Innovative Education Project is designed to demonstrate and evaluate low-cost models which communities can use to help improve educational outcomes for Hispanics. When the models have been evaluated and refined, the project will disseminate the evaluation findings so that education policy makers can incorporate effective approaches into public and parochial school programs. The project also plans to produce implementation guides and curriculum materials to facilitate the replication of effective models by additional community-based organizations. In this way, the Council hopes to continue to contribute to the restructuring and reform of public and private school policies and to increase the level of Hispanic community involvement in providing high quality educational services to Hispanic students, their families and teachers.